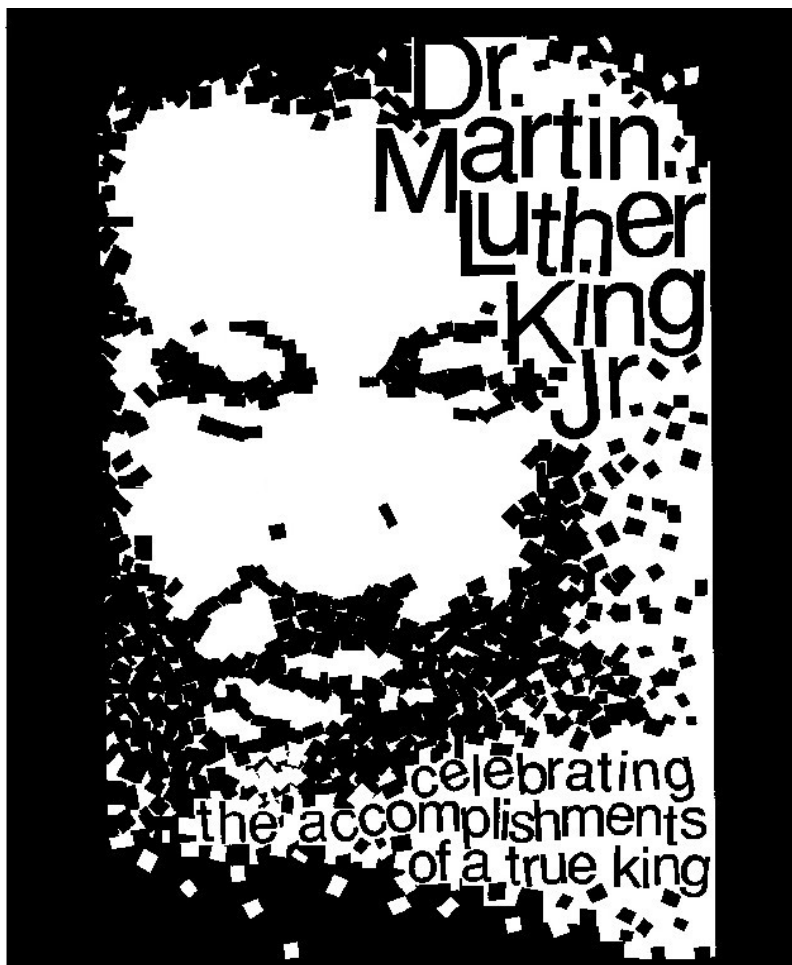


"THE PROMISED LAND"

HARMONY IN DIVERSITY



Original Paper Collage by Brooke Vangel, Columbia, Missouri 1995

Essays by Columbia Students



COLUMBIA VALUES DIVERSITY CELEBRATION

Thursday, January 13, 2005

Interview with Mrs. Li, China

More than two hundred years ago, the first European colonists proudly declared themselves Americans on this piece of land. They were the foreigners when they first arrived in the colonies, but they changed their identity into Americans. Today, there are millions of foreigners in America and that number is growing each year. They are all in the pursuit of a better life here in the U.S. and try to adjust to the life style here. Mrs. Li, who is living in Columbia, Missouri, is one of the foreigners. She is from Dalai, China and she had lived there for nearly 40 years. Her life is greatly influenced by the American culture.

Q.....Mrs. Li, how long has your family been in America?

AAbout 2 years.

Q.....Where do you go from here?

AI study in the Ph.D. program here in the University of Missouri.

Q.....How did your family decide to come to the United States? Through my experience, many immigrants come to America with many different reasons.

AThe reason is to visit my husband first.

Q.....Then what made you stay here?

AWe stayed because my kid likes the school here, and he wants to study in the U.S. That's all.

I was truly touched by her answer. Kids are really the most important things to parents these days, no matter what country they come from.

Q.....Is life in the United States as good as you had expected?

ANo, it is worse in my life.

Q.....Really, How come?

AEverything is too expensive compared to my income.

Now I get it. Being a student and supporting the kids at the same time is pretty hard financially.

Q.....What is the most important thing you need to fulfill your American Dream?

AA job.

Q.....Have you ever encountered racism in this country?

ASome.

I was not surprised. I am a foreigner myself, and I have felt that some other people don't accept me because I am different.

Q.....How did you feel about it?

AI feel sad.

I totally agreed with her.

Q.....Has your lifestyle changed since moving here?

AYes, it has changed much. I don't have to wash clothes everyday by hand like before. I can use my car to visit everywhere I go. It is very convenient.

Q.....What would you like your friends to know about your culture?

AI want them to know today's China is more modern than what they know from movies.

Q.....Did 9/11 affect you?

AYes, after September 11 there are many new limits restricting foreigners like me to hold certain jobs.

Q.....Would you go back if you had a chance?

AYes. After my kid graduates from the university, I'll go back to China at once.

Mrs. Li's answers gave me a new perspective to view America through a middle-aged foreigner. I can tell that a foreigners' life in America is hard, but they all have something that fuels them to pursue their American Dream. They try their best to make a living among the Americans.

Jun Liang
9th Grade, West Junior High
Ms. Sherry Dobbs, Teacher

Interview with Emad Magbool, Pakistan

Columbia is a very diversified city, in comparison to the other towns in Missouri. On my block alone, there are five different cultures. I had several different choices to decide from – Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. I chose to interview my neighbor Emad, he is Muslim and has resided in Columbia for three years.

Emad Magbool's home country is Pakistan. His family came here from Pakistan to the United States because they wanted their children to receive a better education. Emad's family taught him the language and cultures of his home country. His nuclear family resides in the United States; he also has aunts, uncles, and distant cousins still living in Pakistan. Emad and his family lived in New York City until 1999, they then moved to St. Louis. Emad then moved to Columbia to attend the University of Missouri.

Emad enjoys his American life. One of the aspects that he enjoys most is the diversity; that people can work and come together, peacefully as one. He says that Muslims are too often stereotyped, especially since September 11th, and it's mostly untrue. Most think that Muslims are shop owners, or cabdrivers, but they come to the United States to get a higher education and a good job. He has experienced discrimination some because of his culture. As an American citizen, he believes that he has equal rights, and the same rules as Americans. Although there has always been some discrimination and racism present against different cultures and religions, it has increased severely since September 11th. But, Emad says that he would not have any desire to return to Pakistan where there is a very high crime rate and there is also a lot of poverty.

I learned a lot from interviewing Emad. He was a very interesting person who is proud of his culture. We, as a society should try to come together to try to learn about each other and what their cultures are all about.

Krista Sommer
9th Grade West Junior High
Ms. Sherry Dobbs, Teacher

Interview with Aaditya, Singapore

"If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity." (John F. Kennedy) Diversity cannot be measured in skin tone or mannerisms. It is a natural facet of existence, a source of conflict, and the greatest cause for Americans to celebrate. Aaditya is an Indian, a Singaporean, and a New Yorker – but above all he is my friend.

As a friend, I know him by all of these titles, but I also know the deeper person that transcends any culture or status. I have utilized our relationship to examine what I have, and what I don't have today, and I feel I am a better person for it. I asked Aaditya what it was that made America special to him. He promptly told me, "In Singapore there are huge restrictions to keep society in order, many more laws."

Education and creative focus were also points of focus. Points that, today, Americans don't see clearly. "In Singapore, there is no creativity. You have a creative writing, half of the points would be for vocabulary and the others few concerned creativity. Most of the education is out of books. In the United States there's much more thinking, much more discussion." The United States focuses on individuality much more than Singapore does as well. "Here you can choose your own classes and how hard you want to work in them. Classes are also much smaller, meaning more individual attention." Aaditya has made many deeper relationships with his teachers, whom he finds superior. He attributes their superiority to the greater experience they have. While, his peers may complain about the homework their professors give, having experienced the alternative, Aaditya knows the value of American education. As he puts it, "They know how to teach; it makes a huge difference. The better the teacher, the more you learn."

Singapore does have its own values. Singapore is a nation that has a uniquely charming character that could not be replicated here. For example, "Singapore does not have crime." Aaditya says, "No one smokes, no one speeds, no one drinks, no one does drugs. In that sense it's an ideal world. It's also the cleanest place in the world." The United States can make no such claims. Aaditya also recounts the nation's beauty, which he says is unmatched in any place he has ever seen – which includes Asia, Europe, and North America. Singaporeans account for some of the friendliest people in the world. In Singapore, there is a deeper commitment to the common man, which generates a sense of good will between all Singaporeans; a characteristic that the United States does not have.

Singapore and the United States are both very different cultures, one strict, the other loose. Both nations possess specific positives and negatives. My understanding of these positives and negatives has made me diverse. Aaditya has provided an instrument that has shaped me through his experience. This fantastic process is why diversity is important. Although Aaditya and I may be different, we will always be the same in friendship.

Stephen Lee
11th Grade, Rock Bridge High School
Mrs. Hadley, Teacher

Interview with Martha, Ecuador

Q.....How did moving to the U.S. effect your life style?

AI was an M.D. by education and training. When I moved to the United States my training was not recognized and I was required to do my physician training over. I also read well in English but could not easily speak language. It also is a change for my children who also had to learn English as a second language. When I was in Ecuador I had a large family support system. Moving to the United States I lost all my support systems and had to find other ways to adjust.

Q.....Would you ever want to go back to Ecuador?

AYes, I would like to go back to Ecuador to visit, but it would not be feasible for me to be a physician in Ecuador. It takes physicians in Ecuador ten years to build his/her practice. I would also want to visit my family support system but I think my children would have better opportunities in the U.S.

Q.....Why did you choose to move to Columbia?

AI chose to move to Columbia for the work. I also prefer to live in a small city.

Q.....What would you like us to know about your culture?

AWe have many different cultures within our country. For example in the mountains people do things differently than those that don't live in the mountains. Depending on the area you came from in Ecuador you are treated differently. The government also is different in that the money they get is used on the high officials and not the people. Ecuador is a poor county.

Q.....Have you encountered racism?

AI have encountered racism, but it is not much different than what you find in my country. If they know you are wealthy they will try to take advantage of your wealth. I think sometimes I am treated differently because of my heavy accent.

Amy Bildner
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Across the Sea, the story of a girl from China

Chinese New Year began with a celebration all across China. There were parades and dancing in the streets, fireworks lit the night sky with every boom, children ran with carp kites, but one did not join the festivities.

Yang loved Chinese New Year, with all its splendors, the music, the food and the candy but could not join the festivities, for she was miles away from China, across the sea in America. Instead that night, she and her family would celebrate with one of her favorite foods, eggplant with potatoes and rice. She missed this annual celebration, but she was glad to be away from China and its schools with their endless piles of homework. Her father moved the family to American to find work and escape communism, but most importantly to be free. She may not speak Chinese or English fluently, but she's my best friend either way.

Kelly Steinhaus
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Ms. McCarty, Teacher

Being an Immigrant, Iran

My father moved to the United States ten years ago with my mom and older sisters. My dad wants his friends to know about our kindness, respect for other people especially for elderly people, how we share what we have with poor people, and about our delicious food. He came to the United States to pursue higher education and came with one B.A. degree and on M.A. degree. Even though he could continue his education toward a Ph.D. degree in Iran, he preferred to come to the United States because he knew the quality of education would be better in this country.

My father likes the United States because of the broad diversification in this country and because of the opportunity for everyone to go to school and pursue higher education. He believes that the United States is a land of opportunities, and whoever works hard can achieve his or her goal. It is easy in the U.S. to have access to any new research or new findings. This may not be true in other countries.

My dad misses his relatives and friends who are living in Iran. He especially misses playing soccer with his friends and living in an Islamic state in which everything is ruled by the Islamic law. He keeps his culture alive by communicating with his relatives and friends in Iran and teaches his children the same culture, as well as going to the mosque and meeting and praying with other Muslims.

My father would like to go back to Iran and share his knowledge and experience and experience with his fellow Iranians. Hopefully, in the near future he is planning to teach six months in the U.S. and six months in Iran. What my father does not like about the U.S. is the issue of racism. He says that racism is everywhere and we should be prepared to face it. That is, we need to learn how to deal with it. After he received his Ph.D. a few years ago and applied for a teaching position, he had a very unpleasant experience caused by racism. However, that experience did not hurt my father because he knows that in order to achieve success, one needs to be strong and work hard.

My dad's life style has not changed or at least he has done his best to keep it unchanged since he came to the United States. He thinks that the only real Americans are Native Americans, whoever has come to the U.S. must follow the same rules and have the same rights. It does not matter whether a person came to the U.S. yesterday or many years ago. We are all immigrants and part of the great American nation. Everybody was treated equally before September 11, 2001. However, the situation is changed after September 11 and Arab and Muslim Americans were treated differently. Educated and open-minded people throughout the United States have respect toward people from other countries, including people from the Middle East. Unfortunately, this is not true among ordinary people who are greatly influenced by the media propagandas against Muslims. However, one must overlook this and assume that the majority of Americans are tolerant of all types of people.

Zahra Dorestani
4th Grade, Islamic School of Columbia
Miss Najwa Rashidi, Teacher

Interview of a Canadian

Q.....What do you miss about Canada?

A.....My Dad misses being able to see his family and friends regularly. He misses the sport of curling. He misses all the things you can do in Toronto. He misses Hockey Night (Saturday night hockey on T.V.) He misses good ski resorts an hour from his house.

Q.....How did you decide to move to the United States?

A.....The company he worked for needed someone like him to work in the U.S. at that time. He had some unique skills that were hard to find. They offered a good relocation package including an immigration green card. Dad's work could earn a much higher salary in the U.S. and we were only moving across the lake 100 miles. It was a good opportunity.

Q.....How is Canadian culture different than American culture?

A.....Canada and American cultures have a lot in common due to the dominance of the U.S. entertainment industry, and the common cultural background of the initial European settlers in North America. However, in Canada there is more recognition and tolerance of different cultures, which adds to the quality of life for everyone.

One of the reasons we chose to live in Columbia is that it was far more multicultural than the average small American city. Canada has immigrants from all over the world, in large groups in all of the large Canadian cities. The differences of these cultures lead to an awareness of the world and its happenings and events for all Canadians.

Canada is officially bilingual with French as a second language. The French Canadian culture adds much to Canadian culture. Their music and dance ties back to pioneering days, more than most other social groups within North America. Also, Canada has far more awareness and participation in winter sports. (No surprise.)

Q.....As a non-citizen do you think you should have the same rights and follow the rules as Americans?

A.....Everyone that lives in the country should follow the same rules and laws. Laws should apply equally to all people, regardless of their citizenship. However, for those who are willing to make the commitment to become a citizen, it is common throughout the world that those people will have more rights and responsibilities. The United States is fair in the way they apply these principles. Canada may be more generous to immigrants, but he's not sure.

Daniel Maxwell
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview of Ruben Lopez, Cuba

Q.....How did your family decide to come to the U.S.?

A.....My parents decided to leave Cuba because of Fidel Castro, the dictator. When you live in a dictatorship you have no freedom. In 1965 my father decided to leave Cuba, but since he was a doctor, we had to wait 7 years, so we left in 1972. That was when we got permission to leave Cuba.

Q.....What do you miss about your country?

A.....Cuba is an island, and we lived in the south part of the island in a bay. The one thing I miss the most is the ocean. Some of my best memories are when I went to my grandfather's house on this little island in the middle of the bay and as a kid he took me fishing and swimming. I also miss that our family was divided because some of my aunts and uncles and also some of my grandparents left Cuba before we did. Also we had all of the relatives that left after we did so our family was divided. That is something that I miss a lot, being around my family.

Q.....How do you keep your culture alive here?

A.....We celebrate our big Christmas dinner on December 24. My poor wife has had to adapt to the Cuban tradition. We eat fresh ham, black beans and rice, fried plantains, and flan, a type of dessert. I also like to speak Spanish with my parents and I am always asking my kids to speak Spanish so when they get to the 7th grade they can speak Spanish forever and ever.

Q.....Would you go back if you had a chance?

A.....I will not go back to Cuba until Fidel Castro dies and Cuba becomes a free country. That is the only way I would to back to Cuba.

Q.....How has your lifestyle changed since moving here?

A.....It's difficult to say because I was 11 years old when I moved here so I have lived here for 31 years. When you are a little kid you don't really have a lifestyle. Going back to my family, though, one thing that a lot of my family lived in the town where we lived in so I got to see them a lot, whereas here in the U.S. they live in St. Louis, and my aunts and uncles live in Miami or Colorado. But my parents live here in Columbia.

Sara Rohrs
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview with Keshab Gangopadhyay, India

Q.....Tell me a little about your culture.

A.....Family is a very strong thing. Family takes part in celebrations and every day life. Family is what helped get us through the hard times. Since family is so important the marriage rate is high and the divorce rate is low. On many occasions parents pick the couple, perhaps making the marriage and divorce rate the way it is.

Q.....What is religion like in India?

A.....There are many different religions around India but there is no discrimination between different religions. I grew up following the ways of the Hindu religions which is very much like Christianity.

Q.....Why did you decide to come to the U.S.?

A.....The main reason is opportunity and the professional excellence. In India I had my Ph.D. and the United States knew I was good in my area so they gave me a job here. The United States is also very flexible. For instance, I am able to work in other areas than my Ph.D. I am a Nuclear Engineer but I work in the area of mathematics because I excel in it.

Q.....Has your lifestyle changed?

A.....Not much because both government forms are democracy so I don't need to worry about any new rules. The Hindu religion and most religions here in the U.S. believe men are created equally. But here you can get as big as you want in business because of the greater resources. India does not have as much to offer.

Q.....Were you affected by the acts of the Dalai Lama?

A.....He is a great man and has affected our lives in many ways because of his positive influences. His religion is very much the same as ours so it works.

Q.....What do you like about the United States?

A.....I like the freedom and opportunities. The language is great because I was able to get an English education. I am also fond of the open government system. The United States is now my home and I enjoy it very much.

Scott Skrabal
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview with Suki Taira, Japan

Q.....What would you like your friends to know about your culture?

A.....I would like them to know that our culture is very interesting and that many people respect it.

Q.....How do you keep your culture alive here?

A.....My family still cooks traditional Japanese food even when we have guests.

Q.....Would you go back home if you had the chance?

A.....I would probably go home, yes, but I don't know if any of my friends would recognize me.

Q.....What do you miss about your home country?

A.....I miss that everywhere you need to go is within walking distance.

Q.....What do you think we, as Americans, can do to recognize your culture more?

A.....I think that since you recognize Canada's holidays, that you could also recognize Japanese holidays.

Gav Hart
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview with Vladimir Roganovich, Serbia and Montenegro

Q.....What would you like your friends to know about your culture?

A.....That the culture is really rich and that it started in the 12th century.

Q.....What do you like about the United States?

A.....The different lifestyles and different experiences I have had.

Q.....What do you miss about your home country?

A.....Mostly family, my mom, dad, and siblings. I miss them all! I miss the country itself and all of my friends.

Q.....How do you keep your culture alive here?

A.....Talking to my family. I read newspapers from Serbia and Montenegro on the internet. I listen to music from there and celebrate holidays with my friends that are also from there. These friends also help by keeping our religion alive.

Q.....Has your lifestyle changed since moving here?

A.....Yes, having to take care of myself. Usually my mom makes my meals and washes my clothes, but they are not here, so I am a lot more independent. I have also become more responsible for school work and getting money.

Josh Huler
7th Grade Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty Teacher

Interview with Martha Huer, Colombia, South America

Q.....How did your family decide to come to the United States?

A.....I moved here because this is a better place to raise children, get hired easier and it's a very peaceful place.

Q.....How do you keep your culture alive here?

A.....I cook the same food as the food we ate in Colombia and we speak Spanish.

Q.....Have you encountered racism?

A.....Yes, several times and I felt very angry and sad.

Q.....Has your lifestyle changed since moving here?

A.....Yes, I have less time for parties and more time for work and no time for lunch.

Q.....Do you feel you should have to follow the same rules and have the same rights as Americans?

A.....Of course, because I am not from here and I have to respect them.

Morgan Carter
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview with Sirgio Barbosa, Mexico

Sergio Barbosa is an immigrant from Mexico, who became a citizen of the United States some three years ago.

Q.....How did you get to the U.S.A.?

A.....I had to earn \$2000. Then 3 other men and myself had to ride in the trunk of a car for 8 hours until we were inside the border of the United States. We were now on our own in a whole new world.

Q.....What do you like about the U.S.A.?

A.....Better living.

Q.....What do you miss about your country?

A.....My family.

Q.....How do you keep your culture alive?

A.....There are Mexican communities surrounding where I live that practice the Mexican culture and language.

Q.....Would you go back home if you had a chance?

A.....Yes, to visit but then come back to the states.

Q.....Have you encountered racism?

A.....Yes, people pick on me.

Q.....Do you feel you should have to follow the same rules and rights as Americans?

A.....Yes, I should follow the same rights and rules.

Q.....Were you affected by 911?

A.....Yes, it is harder for us as Mexicans to go in and out of the country. The government now has more control over us.

**Heather McCarson
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher**

Interview of Diane Sharp, England

Q.....Would you ever like to go back to your home country?

A.....No, she prefers life here in the United States.

Q.....How does your culture affect your everyday life?

A.....The way she grew up makes her think about things differently and she likes to shop at small stores since it was like that in England.

Q.....What do you like about the U.S.?

A.....She likes that the U.S. is free. She loves the weather and she doesn't need as much money to live here.

Q.....What don't you like about the U.S.?

A.....The attitude toward money is bad. There are rich people who get a lot of money and there are poor people who don't get as much.

Q.....What do you miss about your home country?

A.....She misses her family that lives in England and she can't walk everywhere she wants to.

Q.....Have you experienced racism?

A.....Yes, one time she was in Chicago and a friend didn't like them because they were from England.

Q.....How have you been effected by 9/11?

A.....She can't go from St. Louis to England straight through and it takes a lot of time to travel.

Q.....What would you like people to know about your culture?

A.....English care about people. They let people come to their houses who may be poor. Plus they are very animal friendly.

Jessie Ross
7th Grade Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty

Interview of Jee-Euon Kim, Korea

Q.....How did your family end up in the U.S.?

A.....My Dad is attending the University of Missouri.

Q.....How was your life affected with the move?

A.....I've had the chance to speak three different languages and use my English.

Q.....What are some differences in your lifestyle that you've noticed?

A.....One simple thing I noticed is that in Korea we don't wear shoes in the house and here you do. A common breakfast in Korea is rice rather than cereal. There are a lot more hair colors in the U.S. than in Korea.

Q.....What are some of your traditional customs?

A..... In Korea, hanbok is what we call our traditional costumes. In Korea we use masks to help keep evil spirits away. A traditional food found in Korea is "kim chi".

Q.....Do you think you are treated differently because of your ethnic background?

A.....Yes, I think sometimes, people don't wait for me to answer completely when they are asking a question and they end up just answering it themselves. Sometimes I feel like people look at me and my family funny as if we are from another planet. I also feel the same way when we speak in Korean.

Grace Grigg
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview of Merele Acton, Norway

Q.....Where did you live”

ATronheim, Norway

Q.....How do you keep your culture alive in your home?

AI try to keep some of the Norwegian culture alive by speaking some of the language, introducing new foods, and clothing. Three out of five of my children have been to Norway to visit family and friends. That way they are able to experience the Norwegian culture first hand.

Q.....What do you want your friends to know about your culture?

AI would like Americans to know that Norwegians are very nature oriented people. They love the outdoors and take pride in their land Most Norwegians like to spend time hiking, skiing, and enjoying many other outdoor activities. Cold weather and short days does not stop Norwegians from being outside.

Q.....What do you like about the United States?

AI like the diverse foods offered here. I also greatly appreciate the diverse landscape the nation has to offer.

Q.....How did your family decide to move to the United States?

AMy family moved to the United States so my father could pursue a career in nuclear physics.

Q.....Would you go back to your home country if you had a chance?

AYes, I would. However, my husband is American and my children have been raised here. It would be difficult to ask them to leave their family and friends. I know it was and still is, hard for me.

Q.....What do you miss about your home country?

AMy family and friends and the wonderful food: salmon, caviar, and chocolate. I miss skiing.

**Lasal M.
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarthy, Teacher**

Interview with Nathalia, Brazil

Nathalia is from Brazil, but you wouldn't know it by looking at her or talking to her. She plays flute, swims competitively and is a popular person in our school.

Q.....What would you like your friends to know about your culture?

AWe have really good food!

Q.....How did your family decide to come to the U.S.?

AMy Dad got a job offer here.

Q.....What do you like about the U.S.?

AThe U.S. is more active than Brazil and there are more things to do here.

Q.....What do you miss about your home country?

AI miss mostly my family, who is still in Brazil.

Q.....How do you keep your culture alive here?

AWe speak Portuguese in our house. Sometimes we eat Brazilian foods.

Q.....Would you go back to Brazil if you had a chance?

AYes! In a heart beat!

Q.....Have you encountered racism in the U.S.?

ANope, never!

Q.....Has your life style changed since moving here?

AYes, a little. I changed the way I act to others because in Brazil, everything is more formal.

Lauren Croll
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview with Cyrille Goldstein, France

Q.....What is your home country?

AMy home country is France. It is located in Europe.

Q.....What do you like about your home country?

AI like the food in France. There are many bakeries that sell hot, delicious pastries and other items. The food is much better than our school food. There is also more socializing in France. Most people will stop and talk to you on the street.

Q.....What do you miss about your country?

AI miss the food and the way of life, but most of all I miss my family. Many of my aunts, uncles, and cousins are in France. I miss not seeing them every day. However, I have gone back to see them a few times.

Q.....Would you go back to your home country if you had a chance?

AI would if I had a good reason and a chance to go. I do go back to France regularly to see my family.

Nathan Little
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview with Ganze Yaran, Turkey

Ganze Yaran moved to Missouri from Turkey. She has been living in Missouri for 8 years now.

When I asked Ganze why she and her family moved to America, she answered me by saying that her parents wanted her to have a better education. "The schools in Turkey are very hard," she said. "You have to wear a uniform consisting of a skirt, white shirt, and a jacket that says the school name on the left side and a red ribbon in your hair." Ganze said that life, as well as school, is a lot easier in America. The thing Ganze misses the most about Turkey is her family.

Fashion is a big thing in Turkey. A big holiday is Birham. Birham happens every month. The people exchange presents.

The people in Turkey have their own pledge of allegiance. The people in Turkey were not affected by 9/11 but they felt sorry for the people that were in the towers.

Moving to America made Ganze like things that she had never liked before and go places she had never gone before. Moving to America had many impacts on her life and those are some of the things she shared with me.

Natalie Nevir
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview of George Bihomora, Rwanda

Q.....What country did you come from and how did your family decide to come to the United States of America?

A.....I am from Rwanda and came to the United States as a refugee from genocide.

Q.....Has your lifestyle changed since moving here?

A.....Yes, it has changed because I don't see many of my relatives and many also died in the war.

Q.....What do you miss about your home country?

A.....I miss my grandparents who are still in Rwanda.

Q.....How do you keep your culture alive here in the United States?

A.....I celebrate New Years and other holidays the way people in Rwanda celebrate the holidays.

Q.....Would you go back to Rwanda if you had the chance?

A.....Yes, I would go back to learn more about my country and to see my relatives that I haven't seen for many years.

Chase Baxter
7th Grade Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview with Grace Liang, China

China is the fourth biggest country in the world and also one of the places where ancient civilization was developed. As I learned about China's government, culture, and landforms in social studies, I knew I would be willing to visit China. I wanted to see the Great Wall, the Yellow River and the Tomb of the Great Emperor. But, the thing I was most interested in was the thoughts of the native people. I was curious about how they think/feel about their culture, what they are proud of, and how they like the U.S.A.. Through this essay experience I discovered some answers about Chinese people's thoughts as I interviewed my guest, Grace Liang.

My first question was, "Why are you proud of China?" Grace responded that she started to be proud of Chinese art, since researching for some cultures of China for the Asia Day presentation. She mentioned that she liked the calm atmosphere of the landscape paintings and the nature friendly pictures. I was reminded of my art class when she spoke about Chinese art. Since a couple of weeks ago, I started practicing Chinese brush paintings in art class and at home. Even though I was only using one color, the picture seemed colorful and vivid. I thought that it was a very unique way to paint in Chinese style. I guess if I were Chinese and was asked for the same question, I would've also answered, "the art."

The next topic we talked about was whether she liked living in China or the U.S.A.. Maybe because of the hard question, she delayed the answer for awhile. Then she said, "I like both China and the U.S.A., but I think I like China a little bit more." I could understand her. Even though I have been in America for only 5 months, I already miss my country, Korea. Grace and I both agreed in this answer. As I miss my friends, my relatives, and the own language. Grace also misses living away from one's national country is quite a hard experience.

Though living in another culture is hard, there must be some good points in living in the U.S.A.. So, I asked what she likes about the U.S.A.. Grace likes the school and the kind people. She related that American schools have very good facilities and educational systems. She also liked the nice teachers.

The difference in lifestyles was the biggest curiosity I had. I thought that there must have been many changes in her living. However, her answer was unlooked-for. She told me that there wasn't a real big difference. But she quickly added that there might be many changes, but she doesn't feel like it. I think it is because she still eats Chinese food at home and speaks Chinese with her friends. I bet she had a lot of changes after moving here, as I did, but only not feeling it.

"Were you affected by 9/11?" It was my last question for the interview. I thought that she was in America when the 9/11 terror happened, so I expected more details about her feelings. However, she didn't remark about many things. She simply told me that she was very afraid even now. She said that it still makes her worry and frightens her sometimes. And when it happened, she kept from going out so often so she could feel safe inside the house. I stopped asking her so much about it because she seemed frightened. Nevertheless she didn't describe much; I could feel that she was very afraid about 9/11.

Interviewing someone from another country (who is in the same situation as I am) was very interesting. While interviewing with Grace we found some more similarities between us, and I think we got more close to each other.

Minyoung Lee
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
Mrs. McCarty, Teacher

Interview with Dr. Kerstin Roske, Germany

Three years ago Dr. Roske came to the University of Missouri from Dresden, Germany in order to do postdoctoral research in microbiology. Dr. Roske, her husband Sven, and their ten-month-old son, Lucas, will be returning to Dresden on November 29, 2004.

Q.....Could you describe Dresden?

A.....Dresden is a town with a very long history. Since it was founded in 1206, there are many historic places and buildings. Some of them are still in use, after reconstruction, like the famous Opera House.

Q.....Why did you come to the United States?

A.....I decided to come to the United States to learn English better and to do research in the field of microbiology. I was especially interested in the research done by a group at the University of Missouri-Columbia. In addition, it is very interesting for me to experience how people in other countries live and to talk with them. This way, I get first hand information (about them) without TV and radio.

Q.....What do you like about the United States?

A.....I like the easy way of life here, like the ability to go grocery shopping here seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. In Germany, shops are closed on Sundays to let the employees have some family time. I also like the cheap gasoline prices. At home, I need to plan where to drive more carefully and to combine trips because gasoline is so expensive.

Q.....How do you try to keep your German culture alive?

A.....In order to keep our culture alive, we speak German at home, bake our own German bread, and listen to German music. I also try to dress the way I did at home.

Q.....Have you encountered racism?

A.....No, I have not encountered racism, probably because I am white, so that nobody can tell – immediately – that I am a foreigner.

Q.....Has your life changed since you lived to the U.S.A.?

A.....Yes, my life has changed a lot since I came here. At first, I spent a lot of time in the gym. I saved time by taking a short cut to work and going grocery shopping in the evening, after work, instead of watching T.V. But with time, I became less organized, i.e. I go shopping on Sunday during the day – time that could be spent outside or doing something else. However, I had a baby ten months ago, and this has significantly contributed to the change in my life style.

Q.....What do you miss most about Germany?

A.....I miss the large variety of foods, like cheese (we have at least fifty kinds in an average store) and also the different kinds of bread, especially dark. I also miss that people in Germany dress nicer on a daily basis. For example, nobody goes shopping or to work in sweatpants. When I first came here, I also missed the way Germans took care of their houses. In Germany people have pretty front yards with flowers, and they are extremely near and clean. Still, I got used to the way the way the houses around campus look.

**Pari Jafari
7th Grade, Smithton Middle School
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My Father, Majed Dweik, Egypt

My father, Mr. Majed Dweik, was an immigrant coming to the United States from Egypt and now he has been in the United States for 12 years. He is now a United States citizen.

I asked my father what he liked about the United States. He answered, "I like the nature of the U.S.A. "He likes how the U.S. is divided into different regions with different climates. For example, if you love deserts you can go to Arizona, if you love mountains you can go to the Rocky Mountains, if you love snow you can go to Colorado, and if you love the ocean then you can go to Florida."

Next I asked him what he missed about his home country of Egypt. He said, "I miss my family and hearing the call for prayer each day. I miss the farms and the ocean views. I also miss eating the fruits and vegetables that are really fresh and naturally grown.

After that, I asked him how he keeps his culture alive here. He said, "I keep my culture alive here by interacting with others of the same culture, by celebrating all religious holidays, seeing friends, and being active in our holy place for worship."

The next question I asked him was if he would like to go back if he had the chance. He answered, "I would go back if I had the chance because I want to be with my parents, brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews, nieces and I would like to help people from my country. However, I love my home here too and try to help people in the United States.

Then I asked him if his lifestyle had changed since moving here. He said, "No, my lifestyle hasn't changed because my objectives are the same objectives as when I lived in Egypt. The objectives are to get close to God, help others, and increase my knowledge. I work toward these objectives wherever I live.

Next I asked him if he had visited any other countries before coming here. He answered, "Yes, I visited and lived in many countries before coming to the United States. I have tried to acquire the good habits from each place I lived. I was born in Egypt and also lived in Saudi Arabia and Jordan in the Middle East. I went to school in both England and Germany before coming to the U.S. to go to college. I have also visited Lebanon and Syria in the Middle East, France, Switzerland, Italy, Holland, and Luxemburg in Europe, Russia and Mexico.

Sarah Dweik
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